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THE WOLVES of THE SEA

AND OTHER POEMS

HERBERT BASHFORD

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The Wolves of the Sea

AND OTHER POEMS

BY

HERBERT BASHFORD

Author of "SONGS FROM PUGET SEA," "NATURE STORIES OF THE NORTHWEST," etc.

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SAN FRANCISCO
THE WHITAKER & RAY COMPANY
(INCORPORATED)
1901

GENERAL

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HERBERT BASHFORD.

TO MY WIFE.

NOTE.

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H. B.

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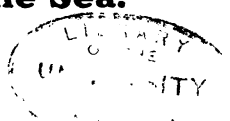
The Wolves of the Sea.



From dusk until dawn they are hurrying on,
Unfettered and fearless they flee;
From morn until eve they plunder and thieve—
The hungry, white wolves of the Sea!

With never a rest, they race to the west,
To the Orient's rim do they run;
By the berg and the floe of the northland they go
And away to the isles of the sun.

They wail at the moon from the desolate dune
Till the air has grown dank with their breath;
They snarl at the stars from the treacherous bars
Of the coasts that are haunted by Death.

They grapple and bite in a keen, mad delight
As they feed on the bosom of Grief;
And one steals away to a cave with his prey,
And one to the rocks of the reef.

With the froth on their lips they follow the ships,
Each striving to lead in the chase;
Since loosed by the hand of the King of their band
They have known but the rush of the race.

They are shaggy and old, yet as mighty and bold
As when God's freshest gale set them free;
Not a sail is unfurled in a port of the world
But is prey for the wolves of the Sea!

The Song of the Forest Ranger.

Oh, to feel the fresh breeze blowing
From lone ridges yet untrod!
Oh, to see the far peak growing
Whiter as it climbs to God!

Where the silver streamlet rushes
I would follow—follow on
Till I heard the happy thrushes
Piping lyrics to the dawn.

I would hear the wild rejoicing
Of the wind-blown cedar tree,
Hear the sturdy hemlock voicing
Ancient epics of the sea.

Forest aisles would I be winding,
Out beyond the gates of Care;
And, in dim cathedrals, finding
Silence at the shrine of Prayer.

When the mystic night comes stealing
Through my vast, green room afar,
Never king had richer ceiling—
Bended bough and yellow star!

Ah, to list the sacred preaching
Of the forest's faithful fir,
With his strong arms upward reaching—
Mighty, trustful worshipper!

Come and learn the joy of living!
Come and you will understand
How the sun his gold is giving
With a great, impartial hand!

How the patient pine is climbing,
  Year by year to gain the sky;
How the rill makes sweetest rhyming,
  Where the deepest shadows lie.

I am nearer the great Giver,
  Where His handiwork is crude;
Friend am I of peak and river,
  Comrade of old Solitude.

Not for me the city's riot!
  Not for me the towers of Trade!
I would seek the house of Quiet,
  That the Master Workman made!

The Voice of Conquest.

I hew my pathway with the Sword!
  Slay Peace and say I throttled Crime!
Ring round with flame the Savage Horde!
  Weave crimson in the robe of Time!

With sabre stroke and thrust of lance
  I shake the regions of Content,
And teach the hosts of Ignorance
  The sweetness of Enlightenment!

I search for gold and gleaming gem,
  Seize fairest islands of the sea,
Find simple folk and fling to them
  From cannon mouth—Humanity!

I seek the realm where dullards dwell,
I make each brutish weakling feel
The good there is in shriek of shell,
The blessings wrought by Fire and Steel.

What matter if Death's pride be War,
Or Weakness be the slave of Might;
Is Progress not a conqueror,
And Power another name for Right?

What matter if I crush the free,
Or if ten million men be slain;
Am I not lord of Destiny,
The Anglo-Saxon god of Gain?

The Fisherman's Story.

I knew he was morose that day
  Because he did not speak to me,
But now I know he was away
  Upon the hills of Italy.

He showed me once long months before
  The picture of a dark-eyed girl
Within a locket that he wore—
  A little keepsake wrought of pearl.

His life had known no counter gale,
  He had the aid of wind and tide,
And dreamed that soon a snowy sail
  Should bear him to his future bride.

'Twas but a letter—nothing much—
A scrap of paper sent to him,
Yet something he did clutch and clutch
The while his dusky eyes grew dim.

And oh, how eagerly he scanned
Each syllable that formed her name!
He crushed the letter in his hand
And fed it to the driftwood flame.

As in a dream he sat and stared
At night's black pall around us flung;
I would have spoken if I'd dared,
But Silence had a gentler tongue.

He did not curse as men will do,
Of grief he gave no outward sign;
That bitter draught of myrrh and rue
He drank as though it had been wine.

With joyless heart he crooned a song
  Of love and hope, as day by day
We hauled our heavy seine along
  The pebbled beaches of the bay.

At last—ah Christ, I'll not forget!
  I never saw the like before!
An empty boat—we, chilled and wet,
  And ten leagues from our cabin door!

Ten weary leagues—a stormy row!
  But fishermen know naught of fear;
Had we ere this not faced the snow
  When winter nights were dark and drear?

Had we not braved the Storm-king's glee
  When winds were shrill and waves were high,
Been battered by a raging sea
  And swung below a ragged sky?

"Oho! Cheer up! Cheer up!" I cried,
"We've dared the seas before, my mate,
What matter if ill luck betide?—
Why, we were born to laugh at fate!"

He grasped his oar with one long sigh,
Nor spoke he any word to me;
And so together, he and I,
Put out upon the angry sea.

And side by side, with steady stroke,
We fought against the veering flaw;
In flakes of froth the billows broke—
The wildest wolves I ever saw!

Ah, how the cutting northwind blew,
And in our faces dashed the spray!
The sullen twilight round us grew,
The green shore faded into gray.

"Cheer up! Cheer up! A merry row
We'll have ere dawn of day!" laughed I;
"And what care we how winds may blow?"
The Sea's voice only made reply.

A silent man he left the shore,
Nor yet a single word had said;
A silent man he dipped his oar
As though it were a thing of lead.

The night came down and still we toiled,
The tumult fiercer grew, and now
The swirling tide-rip foamed and boiled,
And ghostly seas swept o'er the prow.

The air was filled with flying spume,
Cloud-galleons sailed down the sky,
Strange forms groped toward us in the gloom,
Pale phantoms glided swiftly by.

Afar, at times, a lonely loon
Sent quavering laughter through the night,
While from a filmy sheath the moon
Drew forth a sabre, keen and bright.

Oh, it was weird!—the seabird's screech,
The distant buoy's warning bell,
The white palms lifting high to reach
A loosened star that downward fell!

Within my breast each moment grew
A fear of more than wind-blown sea;
And lo! that mute man, laughing, threw
Aside his oar and leered at me.

That moonlit face! It haunts me still!
The eyes that spoke the maddened brain!
That moonlit face! It sent a thrill
Of terror through my every vein!

"Aha! You thought me dead, you cur!"—
His breath blew hot against my cheek;
"Aha! You coward, you lied to her!"—
I felt my limbs grow strangely weak.

"Lorenzo! Look! The boat! The boat!"—
But how can mad men understand?
My God! He leaped to clutch my throat,
A wicked dagger in his hand!

That lifted knife! Ah, yet I feel
A horror of the deadly thing!—
The long keen blade of polished steel
Against the white stars quivering.

I upward sprang—I grasped somehow
The hand that held the hilt of bone;
With panther strength he struggled now,
A demon I must fight—alone!

He strove to slay and I to save
His life and mine if such might be,
And in the trough and on the wave
Like beasts we grappled savagely.

To plead were vain; I could not hear
My voice above the tempest's breath,
I only knew my feet were near
The awful, icy edge of Death.

We fought until the dark became
A glare of crimson to my eyes,
Until the stars were snakes of flame
That writhed along the lurid skies.

We fought I know not how—to me
All things of that mad night appear
As vague as when in dreams you see
The ghouls that haunt the coast of Fear.

We fought—we fought and then—and then—
A leap—a cry—and he was gone!
And I alone pulled shoreward when
The East had grown the flower of dawn.

* * * * * * * * *

I knew he was morose that day
Because he did not speak to me,
But now I know he was away
Upon the hills of Italy.

Why Santa Claus Forgot.

A wind from the south swept down the bay
And pale with anger the waters turned
As the ranchman's wife looked far away
To where the lights of the city burned.

Like feeble stars in that Christmas eve
Were the pulsing lights beyond the tide;
"Now play with your dolly and do not grieve,"
Said she to the wee one at her side.

"Good Santa Claus will come to you
This very night if you do not cry,"
And she wiped a tear like a drop of dew
From the rosy cheek and the anxious eye.

"No sail! No sail!" and the sad wife pressed
A wan face close to the window pane,
But naught she saw save the sea's white breast
And the long gray lash of the hissing rain.

The night fell black and the wild gale played
In the chimney's throat a shrill, weird tune,
While into a cloud as if afraid
Stole the ghostly form of the groping moon.

Then the steeds of the sea all landward came,
Each panting courser thundered o'er
The rocks of the reef and died in flame
Along the utmost reach of shore.

Ah, heavy the heart of the ranchman's wife!
And long she listened, yet only heard
The voice of the breakers in awful strife
And the plaintive cry of a frightened bird.

So long she waited and prayed for day
As the firelight flickered upon the floor,
While the prowling wind like a beast of prey
Did growl and growl at the cabin door.

The gray dawn crept through the weeping wood,
The clouds set sail and all was still;
With a breast of gold the fair morn stood
Above the firs of the eastern hill.

The waters slept and the raindrops clung
Like shimmering pearls to the maple tree;
The sky was clear and the brown birds flung
Sweet showers of crystal melody.

A splintered mast and a tattered sail
Lay out in the sun on the hard, brown sands
And plainer than words they told a tale
To the woman who wept and wrung her hands.

And the little girl with the gold-crowned head
Looked up with her tear-wet eyes of blue;
"Oh, please don't cry, mamma," she said,
"Old Santa Claus forgot me, too."

The Russet-Backed Thrush.

He dwells where pine and hemlock grow,
A merry minstrel seldom seen ;
The voice of Joy is his I know—
Shy poet of the Evergreen !

In dawn's first holy hush I hear
His one ecstatic, thrilling strain,
So sweet and strong, so crystal-clear
'Twould tingle e'en the soul of Pain.

At close of day when Twilight dreams
He shakes the air beneath his tree
With such exquisite song it seems
That Passion breathes through Melody.

Within his shadow-world he sings
Away from sun and light and bloom,
For he alone it is that brings
Keen rapture to the heart of Gloom.

Children.

Sweet flowers along Life's rugged slope
All little children are to me—
White blooms upon the hills of Hope
That drink the dews of Purity.

The Suicide.

A wild, weird night it was; the sharp, curved
moon—
A shining sabre hurled across the sky
Cut through a beggared cloud; beneath each
tree
Were shadows madly dancing to the high
Shrill piping of the wind and to the beat
Of barren limbs that ever writhed and swayed
Above the frosty earth, above the form
Of her who hastened onward undismayed,
Who stood upon the cliff's huge brow of stone,
With floating hair a raven banner blown!

Loud roared the sea below and fierce he strove
To scale that crag and climbed and surged and blew
From hoarsely laughing lips great flakes of foam,
Then in his awful strength reached up and drew
Her close against his breast. The deep caves rang;
The billows rose like mighty wings and seemed
To fan the very stars so brightly did
They burn; the whole, vast ocean shone and gleamed
With phosphorescent light—the pines upon
The hill raised rugged arms and prayed for dawn!

The Derelict.

I am rolled and swung, I am rocked and flung,
I am hammered and heaved and hurled,
I am tossed and wheeled, I am blown and reeled
And battered about the world.

On the pushing tide I ride and ride
Or loiter and loaf at ease,
With never a care, though foul or fair,
I follow the foaming seas.

Men come not nigh when they pass me by
For they fear me, everyone,
As I cleave the gray of the dawning day
Or drowse in the summer sun.

Past unknown isles, for miles and miles
I wander away to where
The iceberg lifts and the salt spray drifts
In the freezing arctic air.

I steal by the bars when the flame-winged stars
Have swarmed in the upper blue
And the glow and shine of the drenching brine
Like white fire burns me through.

I haunt as a ghost the rock-girt coast
Where the bell-buoy loudly rings
And the breakers leap to the mighty sweep
Of the night-wind's sable wings.

I shake and moan, I creak and groan,
In the wrathful tempest when
The old sea raves and digs deep graves
For the jolly sailor men.

What matters time or what the clime
To a vagrant of the sea?
To live or die, oh naught care I,
There is no port for me!

Copalis.

High above the strong Pacific, rising solemnly and lone
Looms the rugged rock, Copalis, like a mountain built of stone.
Break the heavy waves against it, roaring through its caverns wide,
Caverns worn by maddened waters and the moon-enchanted tide.
All around are curling breakers, sifting spray and flying foam,
Where the slim sea otter gambols and the gray gull has a home.
All around is fierce commotion, pale forms reaching to the skies,
Sounds of awful cannonading, haunting moans and battle cries.

Clinging to its craggy summit, fastened down with massive chains,
Bathed in Summer's yellow sunshine, drenched in Winter's driving rains,
Rests a low, quaint hut, the dwelling of the brave Copalis Jim—
Rests the hut whose door is opened—opened never save by him.
From this airy habitation keen black eyes peer on the seas,
Raven locks are tossed and tangled in the sighing ocean breeze.
Night and morn he scans the billows marching grandly far below,
Night and morn he sees the warriors with their helmets wrought of snow.
Day by day he keeps his vigil caring naught for any man,
Watching ever with the patience that the otter hunter can.
Oft his swarthy face grows eager, oft his rifle darts its flame

And a dying creature struggles from that quick, unerring aim.
Oft when midnight winds are calling in his mind sad thoughts arise,
Thoughts of her who held him captive by the magic of her eyes.
In his dreams she stands before him as she stood in days agone,
Ere his heart had grown more hardened than the rock he dwells upon.
And he hears her laughter ringing like the echoes of a lute
Through the forest, still and sombre, down the vales of Quillayute.
And again he sits beside her speaking tender words of love
With the fragrant flowers surrounding and the waving green above.
But the thunder of the breakers and the sea bird's piercing scream
From the ledges, brown and jagged, break the vision of his dream.

Ah! Nawanda, false Nawanda, with your artless
maiden grace,
Think you never of your lover living in this
lonely place?
He, whose fondest hopes you shattered, now a
hermit, mute, alone,
Far away on bleak Copalis, on a mountain built
of stone.

The Wreck of the Ferndale.

Hoarse with calling, pale with anger,
From dim dawn till set of sun
Wind-blown billows, crowding landward,
Shook the shores of Washington.

Stalwart seas tramped down the beaches,
Giant seas, each thunder-toned,
Lunged against the rugged headlands
While the mighty caverns groaned.

Roared along the sandy beaches,
Foaming, panting in the race,
Struck the cliff's opposing ledges,
Leaped to smite its massive face.

Leaped and flung their white arms wildly
Then, all baffled, backward fled
Moaning, sobbing on the shingle
Like a mother o'er her dead.

Night fell black upon the waters,
Night with no star throbbing through;
Fiercer yet the waters battled,
Stronger still the cold wind blew.

Every pine upon the hilltop
Cried in anguish, cried in vain,
And the ranchman's wife peered seaward
With her face against the pane.

Heard the waves' loud cannonading,
Saw at times a lifting light—
Fiery soul of sky-tossed breaker
Burning through the raven night.

Listened sadly at the window
  Thinking of the ships at sea,
Of wrecked sailors drifting helpless,
  And the Storm-king's fiendish glee.

Hark! What sound above the breakers?—
  Was it but the sudden shock
Of a seething sea bombarding
  Towering battlements of rock?

Was it but the crashing thunder
  Of a fir tree's rugged form;
Of a fir tree that had fallen
  As it wrestled with the storm?

No, ah, no! Again the gun spoke
  And the ranchman's wife grew pale;
"God have mercy on a vessel
  Driven shoreward by the gale!"

"God above have mercy on them!
He alone can still the waves!"
"Hear them calling!" "They will perish!"
"How the ocean roars and raves!"

Thus spake trembling, care-worn women,
Sturdy ranchmen, young and old,
As they gathered on the North Beach
In the darkness and the cold.

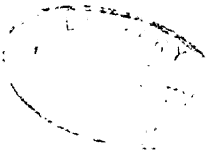
All the night their lanterns glimmered
In the wild wind's icy breath,
While the surf grew thick with cordage
And the breakers talked of death.

All the night they watched and waited
Where the hoary foam-flakes flew;
One by one along the North Beach
Drifted in the Ferndale's crew.

One by one they drifted lifeless
To the bleak Pacific sands,
Salt tears on their pallid faces,
Sea-weeds in their hardened hands.

Eyes of pity looked upon them,
Looked upon them where they lay,
As the morn came softly stealing—
Saddened morn in robe of gray.

And above the heaving waters
In the daybreak, chill and grim,
One lone mast yet pointed upward—
Pointed upward unto Him.



Mt. Rainier.

Like autumn leaves the years may fall upon
His brow from off the ancient tree of Time,
Yet will he tower above the dust and grime
Of earth! The first pink petals of the dawn
That bloomed into the flower of day; the wan
And hesitating moon's first skyward climb
He viewed in silent majesty sublime;
The fir proclaims him king, the great seas fawn
And weave fair garlands at his feet; each stream
Salutes with flashing sword; the wildest storm
That beats against his massive breast ne'er mars
The deep serenity of his white dream.
At night how vaguely grim his awful form,
High-looming in God's wilderness of stars!

To the Moon.

Oh, ever changeful and enchanting moon!
What mystical and varied forms are thine!
Tonight a peerless queen I see thee shine
In raiment from the loom of Dreams; yet soon
When skies grow gray and chill winds pipe a tune,
A ghost thou'l't grope beside the battle-line
Of dark cloud-legions, or, in anguish, pine
Upon the heated highway of red Noon,
Or, wan and careworn, long for quick release
From weary journeys through the deeps of night;
Then, calm as Sleep, wilt thou appear to me,
Thy glowing bosom soft and white with peace,
As though to thee had flown on wings of light
The myriad souls of each gray century!

Longing.

In city walls, where duty bids me stay
I long for woodland paths—sweet breath of pine,
To see again the distant dazzling line
Of slender, sandy shore; I know to-day
How fair must lie the sea far, far away,
On whose broad breast the sun-wrought sapphires shine
And sparkle in the wind that breathes of wine;
How shafts of gold and shifting shadows play
Beneath cool groves that sing a slumber song,
And clear bird notes are tingling through and through
The peaceful heart of Silence! Ah, I long
For friendly firs that brush against the blue
And each still night to watch the warrior Mars
Review the vast procession of the stars!

Eventide.

The garish day is done, and faint and far
Like jagged shadows all the mountains lie—
White priests that saw the red sun sink and die;
Leaf-hidden birds where willow clusters are
Fling down sweet showers of melody; a bar
Of burnished gold from sunset's forge hangs high
Above the hills and in the purple sky
Beyond, the twilight grows one yellow star.
Along some distant lane the cattle go
With bells that sound like music heard in dreams
Of years agone; the moon with soul of light
Now crowns God's highest pyramid of snow,
While from dim ponds and softly flowing streams
Ring out the rhyming minstrels of the night!

The Oregon Ruffed Grouse.

A lover of dim ways in woodland shade
Is he, whose martial music, shakes the still
Cool air where lilies drowse and silver rill
Alone draws light adown the gloomy glade;
Where, deep within the hush, dank moss is laid
That Solitude may rove from hill to hill
With soundless tread, and where no bird's glad trill
Ere breaks the iron silence God has made.
To haunt sequestered dells is his delight
Beneath low-drooping boughs that shadow all
The dreamy pools; and when, care-worn, we come
To where the wilderness makes of the night
A dusky slave forever held in thrall,
How sweet to hear the throbbing of his drum!

Night.

Beloved Night! Calm, soothing summer Night!
Your presence breathes of peace; your raven hair
Falls over me and tender as the prayer
Of kneeling virgin in dawn's holy light
Is your carressing hand on Sorrow's white
And trembling lips, or furrowed face of Care.
Sweet slumber nestles on your breast and where
Your dark robe trails, in valley or on height,
The petals of your dream-flowers flutter down
To sleeping eyes. I love you, love you so,
Mother of mine! And when the day is done
I watch to see the first gleam in your gown
Of lambent jewels that thrill and throb as though
The pulse of God beat through them—every-one!

The Passing of Autumn.

The glory of her reign is o'er and old, forlorn,
A faded, tattered gown around her drawn
She sits with drooping head and broods upon
The time ere her rich robes were rudely torn
And cast aside; a beggar, weary, worn
Is she, whose garments like a gorgeous dawn
Once lay along the hills; her pride is gone
And naught is left her but to mourn and mourn
Amid her ruins. Oft there comes to me
From out the wood her low, despairing wail
When thoughts of that imperial attire
Of other days bring keener agony,
When all exultant she heard nation's hail
The queen of Color with her soul of fire.

On Newbrasky's Fertile Shore.

Oh, I am so orful humsick! An' I feel so wretched queer!
Ephrum, he has gone a ridin' on a wild eclectric keer,
Rhody—that's my only darter—she has gone an' left me, tew,
Both a trapesin' 'round like ijits—wonder what's th' next they'll do?
They don't seem t' think they're darin' Providence right in th' face,
Ridin' without hoss er engine 'n' goin' at a break neck pace.
Course I needn't stand here waitin', both insisted I should come,
But I vow I'll not be reckless when I am so fer from hum.

Clear out here by th' Pacific, jist as fur as we kin git
An' if we stay here much longer I declare I'll hev a fit.
It's th' most deceivin' kentry as ever' one'll say
Ever' drap o' water *salty* in th' hull o' Frisco bay.
Oh I've tramped these pesky sidewalks till my feet is lame an' sore,
An' a yearnin' ever' minute fur Newbrasky's fertile shore!

Then they brag about their scenery! Californy! Humph! O dear!
Scenery! Well, jest speaking plainly, I don't see no scenery here.
Nothin' but th' mount'in ranges rarin' up so tarnal high
Thet a buddy kint look nowheres 'cept the middle o' th' sky.
Mount'ins, everlastin' mount'ins, hills 'n' woods 'n' rocks 'n' snow

Where th' scenery is they're braggin' on I'm
th' one as wants t' know.
Let 'em stand in Lincoln county jest aback our
cowyard fence,
An' if they don't say there's scenery they haint
got a mite o' sense;
Why yuh kin look fur miles around yuh an' see
nothin' but th' flat
Level prairie in th' sunshine kivered in its grassy
mat.
That is scenery—yuh kin look there jest as fur
as yuh kin see
With no hills a interposin' er no rocks, er airy
tree,
Oh, I've told my husband, Ephrum, that I'd
gallavant no more
When ag'in I'd sot my foot on old Newbrasky's
fertile shore.

Then I'm worried so 'bout Rhody, fur she's
missin' ever' day

All her lessons on th' melojun that paw bought
fur her last May,
An' she could perform amazin'; she could play
"Old Hundred" nice
An' another song beginin' "Happy Day that
Fixed My Ch'ice."
Yes, th' singin' teacher told me as we parted at
th' keers,
He was shore she'd play th' organ in th' church
'fore many years.
Now her notion's highkerflutin', a pianner she
wants now
An' her paw sez he will get it soon as he kin
sell a cow,
Sez he kin dispose o' Muly—I jest told him no
sir e–e
Not fur no new-fangled nonsense—Muly's my
cow, an' you see
He's jest got a spite ag'in her 'cause she's got a
lengthy tail
An' in fightin' skeeters sometimes whisks it in
th' milkin' pail.

Oh, I'll be the gladdest mortal when I reach th' kitchen door
Of that dear old farmhouse standin' on Newbrasky's fertile shore!

No, I don't enjoy th' city where the wimmen folks is dressed
Monday an' clean through till Saturday all in their Sunday best,
I jest like to ketch my wrapper up 'n' pin it 'round my waist,
Carin' not a single copper if my shoe string comes unlaced,
Then go out an' milk old Muly an' turn out th' spotted calf
While th' chickens giggle 'round me an' th' speckled roosters laff,
Then go in th' summer kitchen, set me down an' churn a spell,
Till time comes t' put th' victuals on an' ring th' dinner bell.

Yes I love th' peaceful quiet o' th' farm where it's so still,
Nothin' but th' ducks a quackin' 'n' pigs a squealin' fur their swill,
Nothin' but th' geese a clackin' 'n' the bawlin' o' th' cows,
An' th' nickerin' o' th' hosses as they're comin' t' th' house,
Oh I want t' leave th' city with its racket an' its roar
An' git back there t' the silence o' Newbrasky's fertile shore!

Derndest Gal I Ever Knowed.

Derndest gal I ever knowed,
Neatest gal I ever seen,
Lived down in the Red Ravine
Jest below the county road.
Guess she wuz about sixteen—
Sophy wuz her name an' she
Wuz ez cute ez cute kin be.

When I'd go t' town I brung
Her the biggest lot o' stuff,
Pop corn, likrish, 'n' enough
Candy fer t' fill a room.
Once she hit me with a broom
Cuz I kissed her on the cheek,
An' the midget wouldn't speak
T' me fer, perhaps, a week.

When I'd raise my eyes to hern
Jeminny! my cheeks 'ud burn
An' git redder 'n' a beet.
Oh, she looked jest powerful sweet!
When I'd try to call her dear
Why I'd feel so doggoned queer
That I'd lean ag'in' th' fence
Zif I didn' hev no sense
Twist th' buttons on my vest,
Ast her who she liked th' best,
Ast her if it wuzn't Bill
Er old Jones thet run th' mill,
Keep a hintin' 'round yuh see
Till she'd up an' say 'twuz me.

I wuz jellus o' Jim Pike
Jellus ez th' very deuce
Though there didn't seem much use
Fer his freckles wuz so thick,
An' his hair wuz so like brick
Thet a feller one day said
Yuh could toast a hunk o' bread

Ef yuh'd hold it nigh his head.
He wuz awkarder 'n' sin,
Never fished along the crick
But he'd hev t' tumble in.

Sophy 'peared t' pity Jim
While I thought if I wuz him
I'd go off 'n' hide somewhere
Else put plaster on my hair.
But this homely, lantern-jawed
Lookin' cuss stood 'round 'n' chawed
On a plug o' terbacker
Half his time 'n' talked t' her
Of his love till I jest told
Him t' mosey an' he rolled
Up his sleeves 'n' landed me
Plumb betwixt th' eyes, then he
Went to Sophy an' sir, she
Married him! The pesky mule!
Wuzn't she a reg'ler fool?
I wuz jest tetotally blowed—
Derndest gal I ever knowed!

Sence My Mary Went Away.

Ah sir! You should just have seen her,
Seen her long and silky hair
Shinin' like a shock o' sunbeams
Wavin' in the summer air!
Then her cheeks seemed bloomin' roses,
An' her fingers—don't yuh know—
They was white as maple branches
Wrapped around by winter's snow.

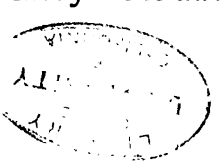
Eyes so big an' blue an' honest
Allus gazin' int' mine,
An' a heart that never faltered
Whether rain or whether shine,
Cheerful words for ev'r'body,
Smilin' all the livelong day,
Do yuh wonder that I'm lonely
Sence my Mary went away?

I remember how we used to
On them sunny afternoons
Stroll together down the woodland
Listenin' t' th' merry tunes
Played by little, jolly breezes
Foolin' 'mong the tree tops high,
An' she thought that river yunder
Was a strip o' fallen sky.

Course its only my odd fancy
Anyhow it strikes me so,
Thet things now haint half so cheery
As they was a year ago.
The trees air green, its mighty sartin
But to me they're allus gray
An' the birds seem sorter silent
Sence my Mary went away.

Why th' pathway down th' valley
  Where we wandered hand in hand
Is to-day a sorter gloomy one
  I kint quite understand,
Then the crick thet giggled softly,
  Shook itself 'n' run along
Now goes slippin' past the willers
  With an orful solemn song.

Them old hills, too—eh! Yer goin'?
  Sorry t' hev kept yuh here.
Good by! Strange th' air looks misty!—
  Mebby—why—'twas just a tear!
Like as not you think me foolish
  An' don't keer for what I say,
But I feel, oh God, so lonesome
  Sence my Mary went away!



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